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Section I. Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-21, and add new claims 22-42, as set forth below in the listing of the claims of the application.

1-21. (Canceled)

22. (New) A centrifuge tube having a body with a closed distal end, an open proximal end, and integral hinge elements at opposing sides of the body to facilitate compression flattening of at least a portion of the body, wherein the body has a substantially uniform diameter along the open proximal end.

23. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 22 wherein the body has a central axis extending through the closed distal end and the open proximal end, the body has an average cross-sectional area in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and the open proximal end has a cross-sectional area at least as large as the average cross-sectional area.

24. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, further comprising a cap matably engageable with coupling structure at the proximal end of the centrifuge tube.

25. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, wherein the body comprises concave depressions on an exterior surface of the tube, opposedly facing one another, between the respective integral hinge elements.

26. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, wherein each of the integral hinge elements comprises any of a ridged structure, a corrugated protrusion structure, and a protrusion of generally triangular cross-section.

27. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, formed by a molding technique selected from the group consisting of extrusion blow molding and rotational molding.

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28. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, having a generally cylindrical form, an inner diameter of up to about one inch, and a length in a range of from about 3 inches to about 8 inches.
29. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, formed of a polymer selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, polyvinylchloride, polybutylene and polyurethane.
30. (New) A specimen collection kit comprising the centrifuge tube of claim 22, a cap matably engagable with the proximal end of the centrifuge tube, and a swab article having a swab element adapted to collect a specimen and sized such that the swab element may be inserted through the proximal end into an interior portion of the centrifuge tube.
31. (New) A centrifuge tube having a body with a closed distal end, an open proximal end, and integral hinge elements at opposing sides of the body to facilitate compression flattening of at least a portion of the body, wherein the body has a central axis extending through the closed distal end and the open proximal end, the body has an average cross-sectional area in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and the open proximal end has a cross-sectional area at least as large as the average cross-sectional area.
32. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 31 wherein the body has a substantially uniform diameter along the proximal end.
33. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 31, further comprising a cap matably engageable with coupling structure at the proximal end of the centrifuge tube.
34. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 31, wherein the body comprises concave depressions on an exterior surface of the tube, opposedly facing one another, between the respective integral hinge elements.
35. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 31 wherein each of the integral hinge elements comprises any of a ridged structure, a corrugated protrusion structure, and a protrusion of generally triangular cross-section.

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36. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 31, formed by a molding technique selected from the group consisting of extrusion blow molding and rotational molding.
37. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 31, having a generally cylindrical form, an inner diameter of up to about one inch, and a length in a range of from about 3 inches to about 8 inches.
38. (New) The centrifuge tube of claim 31, formed of a polymer selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, polyvinylchloride, polybutylene and polyurethane.
39. (New) A specimen collection kit comprising the centrifuge tube of claim 31, a cap matably engagable with the proximal end of the centrifuge tube, and a swab article having a swab element adapted to collect a specimen and sized such that the swab element may be inserted through the proximal end into an interior portion of the centrifuge tube.
40. (New) An analytical method comprising the steps of:
providing a swab article having a swab element adapted to collect a specimen;
providing a centrifuge tube having a closed distal end, an open proximal end, and a body with integral hinge elements at opposing sides thereof to facilitate compression flattening of at least a portion of the body;
contacting a specimen with the swab element;
inserting the swab element through the open proximal end into an interior portion of the centrifuge tube;
compressively flattening at least a portion of the body to contact and compress the swab element to extract at least a portion of the specimen.
41. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising the step of inserting the centrifuge tube into a centrifuge and subjecting the centrifuge tube and its contents to centrifugation.
42. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the centrifuge tube is characterized by any of:
(i) the body having a substantially uniform diameter along the open proximal end; and (ii) the body having a central axis extending through the closed distal end and the open proximal end, the

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body having an average cross-sectional area in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and the open proximal end having a cross-sectional area at least as large as the average cross-sectional area.